United Nations E/AC.51/1998/L.7/Add.7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
25 June 1998

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Thirty-eighth session
1-26 June 1998 (part I)

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 14. Economic and social development in Africa

1. At its 18th meeting, on 16 June 1998, the Committee considered the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. It had before it the proposals in respect of programme 14. Economic and social development in Africa.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced programme 14 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support for the proposed revisions was expressed. It was considered that the narrative of the two new subprogrammes was clear and had been drafted in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programming Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

4. Concern was expressed that the resources currently available to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) were already insufficient and that the addition of the two new subprogrammes would further reduce the resources available for each subprogramme. Given the requirements of the African region, the view was expressed that it was necessary to provide ECA with adequate resources for carrying out its programme of work in accordance with the revised medium-term plan.

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5. It was recalled that in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, the General Assembly decided that any savings realized during the biennium as a result of reform measures and efficiency gains from within ECA should be redeployed to the subregional centres.

6. Views were expressed that the current narrative of programme 14 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, including the proposed new subprogrammes, was not correctly formulated. It was emphasized that, as for the programmes of the other regional commissions, programme 14 should have included a sufficient number of subprogrammes so as to deal with all critical areas and priority concerns for African development.In this context, it was considered that the following issues should have received particular attention:

(a) The African Economic Community at the dawn of the third millennium: African competitivity and integration in the world economy;

(b) Strengthening of capacities: governance and management of development;

(c) Integration and regional cooperation;

(d) Raw materials, diversification of the African economy and sustainable human development;

(e) Research, mastering of technology, transport, communications and telecommunications in Africa;

(f) Popular participation in development: women, youth and civil society;

(g) Food, health, education, habitat and professional and vocational training;

(h) Trade and industry;

(i) Mobilization of resources and financing of development: debt reduction, internal resources, additional external resources and partnership;

(j) United Nations Special Initiative for the Implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa;

(k) Action programme for African least developed countries;

(l) Development and social justice;

(m) Cooperation with other regional commissions.

7. Views were expressed that the current narrative of programme 14 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 was well formulated by reducing its subprogrammes from 21 to 5. For this reason, the new programme structure for the present medium-term plan was adopted by the Committee two years ago.

8. Views were expressed that due account should be taken of the Committee's comments in the drafting of the future programmes of the medium-term plan of ECA.

9. The mandate of ECA in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action was questioned. It was noted that this function was to be fulfilled by national Governments and coordinated by the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

10. The view was expressed that subprogramme 14.7 did not refer to cooperation with other subregional institutions. It was suggested that subregional entities like the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Arab Maghreb Union and others, as relevant, should be mentioned in the text of the subprogramme.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended approval of the proposed revisions to programme 14 of the medium-term plan.